



News Release

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School supplies: no longer just pens and pencils — it's immunizations, too

Make sure kids get the vaccines they need to start the school year off on a healthy note

OLYMPIA — It's hard to think about summer ending, yet the school year is fast approaching. Parents can help their kids prepare by making sure immunizations are included on their back-to-school list.

Get a head start by making an appointment now before healthcare providers get booked up with sports physicals and yearly checkups. All vaccines required to enroll in school are available to children at no cost from healthcare professionals across the state.

"It's important for our kids to start school healthy and prepared," said Janna Bardi, director for the Department of Health's Office of Immunization and Child Profile. "Immunizations are one of the best ways to help a child stay healthy during the school year. The less time a child is out sick from a preventable illness, the more time they can spend in the classroom, learning."

Kids who aren't fully immunized may be sent home from school if a disease outbreak occurs. Fortunately, most kindergarteners in our state have all the vaccines they need to enter school. However, disease can spread quickly in schools and child care centers, so it's important to make sure everyone is protected.

Several immunizations are needed before [kids can start school](#) and [meet child care requirements](#). All children must be vaccinated against whooping cough (pertussis); it's especially important given the recent outbreak in our state.

No-cost vaccines are available to kids up to age 19 through healthcare providers participating in the state's [Childhood Vaccine Program](#). Participating providers may charge for the office visit and an administration fee to give the vaccine. People who can't afford the administration fee can ask for it to be waived.

— More —

Save extra trips to the doctor's office by getting flu vaccine for the whole family at one visit. Flu vaccine is starting to arrive. It's recommended that everyone six months and older be vaccinated against the flu as soon as the vaccine is available; it's especially important for high risk groups including, young kids, pregnant women, people 65 and older, and people with certain medical conditions like asthma, heart disease, diabetes, and neurological conditions. A yearly flu shot is the best protection against the flu, especially when combined with good health manners: cover your cough, wash your hands, and stay home when you're sick.

For help finding a healthcare provider or an immunization clinic, call your [local health agency](#) or the [WithinReach](#) Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

The [Department of Health website](#) (doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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